

The Book Club of California  
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**An Enemy Alien in Berkeley**

*Reminiscences of the War Years by a  
Slightly Bemused Thirty-Niner*



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## An Enemy Alien in Berkeley

*Reminiscences of the War Years by a Slightly Bemused Thirty-Niner*

By Bernard M. Rosenthal

*The following is the text of Mr. Rosenthal's January 18, 2000, talk to the Roxburghe Club of San Francisco. At its conclusion, appreciative murmurs of "A shorter New Yorker 'Profile'?" were heard, so QN-L is honored to transcribe here the spoken words from that occasion. William P. Barlow, Jr., introduced Mr. Rosenthal, condensing his fifty years in the antiquarian book trade into a few witty minutes.*

ON THE ANNOUNCEMENT it says I'm the first speaker of the century, but I could quibble with that. I'm one of those who say the next century begins *next* January. But I definitely *am* the first speaker of our sesquicentennial – and I take great pride in that.

When Deke Sonnichsen asked me to speak today, he suggested a theme such as "The future of book-collecting and of antiquarian book selling in the electronic age." But it's a topic that's getting a little tiresome by now – and I suggested an alternative. Would it be OK to be frankly autobiographical, and specifically could I talk about the time when I arrived in California, what led me to come here in the first place, and what it was like to be here in the forties—nothing to do with books. Being obviously desperate for speakers, Deke readily agreed.

If I have the audacity to stand here before you and talk about myself, I plead mitigating circumstances: August of last year marked the sixtieth anniversary of my arrival in Berkeley – and after these six decades, I've gained some perspective, and I find that I was part of a certain rather well-defined group of Continental European immigrants – call them Thirty-Niners, if you wish – who settled here in the late thirties and early forties – not a particularly large group, but an influential one. So let me start by telling you who I was when I came here in 1939.

I was born in 1920 in Munich, Germany, the youngest of five children. My mother was Italian, the daughter of Leo Olschki, Italy's foremost antiquarian bookseller, who had settled permanently in Florence around the turn of the century. All his six children, including my mother, were born in Venice and grew up in Florence. My father, Erwin, was German, the only son of an equally renowned antiquarian bookseller, Jacques Rosenthal of Munich, a friend and colleague of Olschki.

After their marriage in Florence in 1912, my parents settled in Munich, and eventually they and we five children moved to a beautiful villa set in the midst of

a park large enough so that I could invite my entire class for a soccer game, or build myself a ski-jump in wintertime. By the standards of today, it was a princely household, with a governess, servants, gardeners, even a part-time seamstress, and a chauffeur for the large Buick – yes, in those days, Germans who wanted to be fashionable bought American cars....

My parents had something comparable to a *salon* where Munich's artists, intellectuals, academics, and bibliophiles frequently gathered. There were many visitors from abroad and from among our Italian relatives. All of us were taught Italian by our mother, and it was soon taken for granted in our household that you spoke Italian to mother and German to father. During my childhood, the long summer holidays were always spent with our relatives in Italy, mostly in Florence and on the island of Elba.

When Hitler came to power in Germany in January 1933, life as we had known it came to an end. My father did not listen to the well-meaning friends who urged him to stay because surely "it can't happen here" and "it will all blow over in a few weeks." He took us out of school before we were *kicked* out, and I left Munich and moved to Florence, where, thanks to an incredible amount of cramming, I was able to enroll in the equivalent grade of an Italian school. In previous years, trips to Italy had been holidays, but now I was just another kid in an Italian public school, and it wasn't all fun anymore. Also, there was a catch: all students in public schools had to be members of the Fascist youth organization known as *Avanguardisti*. So I joined and swore the oath of allegiance, which is worth quoting in full:

In the name of God and of Italy I swear to obey the orders of *Il Duce* and to serve with all my strength and, if necessary with my blood, the cause of the Fascist Revolution.

Pretty strong stuff for a thirteen-year-old.

Actually, this being Italy, you didn't really have to stand there and take a formal oath; you brought your yearly dues to class at the beginning of the school year and the oath was printed on the back of your membership card. For over five years – whenever there was a parade or some sort of official "do" – I dutifully wore the uniform, including the black shirt, the greenish pants, and the rather stylish hat that went with it. I was an enthusiastic skier and became part of a group that emphasized skiing and winter sports. For two years in a row I was a member of the team that represented Florence in the national ski championships in northern Italy.



It may seem strange to an audience of today that young Jews would join a Fascist organization. But it must be remembered that Mussolini wasn't at all enthusiastic about the rise of Hitler in the early years of Nazism, and that racism in general and anti-Semitism in particular were non-issues in the theory of Fascism. German refugees who sought asylum in Italy in the early thirties when we settled there were well received and were easily granted residence permits.

Many years later, I asked my mother whether she didn't have second thoughts about allowing her boys to join the Fascist youth organization. She said that, aside from the fact that membership was compulsory, we had gone through a pretty traumatic change, we were the only foreigners in the school, and she wanted us to feel at ease in our new surroundings, and not to feel "different" from the others. A little later, I'll have more to say about this feeling "different"....

By the way, I should say that when I use the plural "us," I include my brother Felix, with whom I shared my years in Italy and Paris and most of my early years in Berkeley.

Thanks to my large extended family and the many new friends in school, I got over the "culture shock" fairly quickly, and I became a loyal little Italian – or I should say Florentine, complete with all the prejudices Florentines have against the rest of Italy (and the world).

But it wasn't long before Mussolini fell more and more under the sway of Hitler, and anti-Semitism started creeping into the official policy of the Fascist party in about 1936. A more immediate "close-to-home" event was Hitler's first official visit to Italy in 1938 and the sealing of the alliance known as the "Berlin-Rome Axis." Florence was one of the cities on Hitler's itinerary, and I remember the sudden frenzy of activity of repaving streets, cleaning the façades of the run-down *palazzi*, and the general sprucing up that had been neglected for decades.

I remember walking through one of the streets of Florence where the pavement had been completely dug up, and way down below street level workmen were replacing a sewer pipe. I shouted down to them, "What are you fellows doing – looking for oil?" And one of them answered, "No, we're looking for the Axis." That's Florence for you.

A somewhat less positive side effect of this state visit was that, for security reasons, the police was ordered to round up all the German refugees and put them in jail for the duration of the visit. But we were given the alternative of leaving the city, and I spent a week in Milan with my brother Felix, who was going to college

there, instead of in a Florentine jail. Despite such straws in the wind, my life continued normally, and shortly before I turned eighteen I was even asked to officially join the Fascist party. By that time I was beginning to develop something like a political consciousness, and I was able to side-step this flattering invitation on the grounds that I was not yet an Italian citizen.

During our childhood in Munich, all our long holidays were spent in Italy – but now that we were living in Italy, we spent summers in England and France to broaden our education. And so it came that I was in Paris in 1938 when the Italian government decreed that foreign Jews were no longer allowed in public schools. Seen from the perspective of the time, not being able to complete high school was a disaster of unimaginable proportions and caused me near panic. I did not return to Italy, and this caused me great sadness; this new exile was much harder on me than leaving Germany five years earlier.

There was an Italian high school in Paris, administered by the Italian government. Swallowing my pride, I walked into this modernistic glass and concrete building, past the portraits of Mussolini and King Victor Emmanuel, and was received by the school's principal. He listened to my story and, to my amazement, he allowed me to transfer to his senior class; he concluded with the words, "Here we don't do such filthy things." And this from an official in the Italian school administration, who was risking his career! An act of courage and of enormous kindness which even now, sixty years later, fills me with gratitude.

We settled in Paris, and once again mother managed to make our apartment into a warm and elegant home. For me, it was a period of unrelenting study and cramming and virtually no time for sightseeing or for social life.

But even during this ordeal, there were lighter moments.

One evening my brother and a few visiting Italian friends – all several years older than I – took me in tow, and we ended up in a certain *maison* in Montmartre. No doubt it had been decided that the time had come for me to undergo the rites of passage, in those days a form of initiation rather common among Italians of my age. But it was not to be: a few minutes later, we beat a hasty and undignified retreat and found ourselves back on the sidewalk. It wasn't that we hadn't liked what we saw – it was because of the prices Madame had quoted....

Despite the outward stability of our family life in Paris, we lived in a state of constant insecurity: our residence permits were subject to renewal by the French police, and going to the police headquarters with our hated German passports with



the swastika on the cover, sitting in crowded waiting rooms not knowing whether a renewal would be issued, and being at the complete mercy of indifferent police officials was a humiliating (and very time consuming) experience.

It was in this atmosphere of constant uncertainty and the obviously deteriorating political situation in Europe that I decided to emigrate to the United States as soon as I had graduated from high school, a decision reinforced by the constant urging of relatives in New York, who seemed to see the writing on the wall much more clearly than we could. It was, I thought, a rather hopeless dream, because the German quota was filled for literally decades; but I went to the U.S. Consulate anyway, and I couldn't believe my ears when they informed me that, as a minor (I was nineteen), I could come on my mother's visa: mother was Italian and since the Fascists had forbidden emigration, the Italian quota was wide open and, yes, "you can go any time you wish." At the time, that was like being told that the gates of Paradise are wide open. It's not that I shared the image of America's streets being paved with gold – we weren't that naive – but just the idea of being able to go to a country where you could acquire citizenship and be free of the turmoil in Europe was simply fantastic. Politically, we were quite ignorant and knew virtually nothing of American history – I knew about George Washington and had learned that Lincoln abolished slavery. But I was sure of one thing: Roosevelt was god, period. Once I got here, I found out to my utter astonishment that there were people who hated him – most of them were called Republicans....

Now that I knew there would be no quota problem, I really had no idea *where* to go – all I knew was that I did not want to settle in New York, because that's where everybody else seemed to be going. And I wanted to get as far away from Europe as possible. Just about then, an Italian friend of mine who had spent a year at the University of California in Berkeley came to stay with us in Paris for a few days on his way home to Italy. He quickly convinced me that Berkeley was *the* place to go – he made it sound as if there were no other university anywhere. So we pulled out an atlas, he showed me where Berkeley was (on the shores of the Pacific, WOW!), and I sent off my application for admission. The application was accepted, I passed my high school exams by the skin of my teeth, and in July of 1939, my mother – immigration laws required that she accompany me – and I boarded a transatlantic liner at Cherbourg, bound for New York. During its brief stopover in Southampton, my brother Albi, who had lived in London since 1933, came aboard to greet us – the next time I was to meet him was as an American GI in England five years later.

America (somehow, we didn't call it "the United States" then) was sensational from the moment we landed: a customs officer examined our luggage and papers, then asked me whether I really intended to live here. After hearing my eager "yes," he pulled me aside, out of my mother's earshot, put his arm around my shoulder and said, "Young man, then let me give you some advice: just remember that in *this* country, the woman is the boss." Such informality and humorous friendliness on the part of a uniformed government official was unheard of to those of us who had been taught to show deference and respect, not to say humility, in our contacts with such officials in Europe.

I left New York for California a few weeks later and arrived in Berkeley on August 13th after another sensational experience: the four-day train trip from coast to coast. I witnessed the wonders of the American landscape, traveling from Chicago onward on the glamorous *City of San Francisco* through states I hardly knew existed (Nebraska, Utah, Nevada!) and stopping at cities whose names reminded me of the Cowboy-and-Indian stories by the German author Karl May which we devoured when we were children and which shaped our image of the West (Omaha, Cheyenne, Laramie!); I crossed the Great Salt Lake at sunset – and stayed awake long enough to see the outlines of the Sierra Nevada. After all this, getting off the train in Berkeley in the early morning was somewhat of a let-down: it was a grey, chilly and foggy August morning, not the kind of weather Europeans expect in California – the land of palm trees, beaches, and eternal summer. The taxi ride to International House, where I had booked a room for the semester, was also pretty bleak, along shabby University Avenue with its forest of telegraph poles and vast tangles of overhead wires—it surely had nothing in common with the *Rue de l'Université* in Paris. My reaction upon first seeing the Campanile was one of condescension, even disdain – I can be forgiven for that; after all, I had grown up in the shadow of a campanile designed by Giotto. But these initial disappointments dissipated quickly – I learned all about fog and chilly mornings in August, and I learned to appreciate the beauty of the Campanile as a wonderful piece of architecture in its own right. International House, where I lived for almost a year after my arrival, was a friendly community into which someone of my background fit easily. When I noticed that part-time jobs were available, I applied for one and, to my great surprise and joy, was hired as a bus-boy working in the I-House cafeteria for a few hours every day. The first day I reported for work, the manager, Mrs.



Wilson, asked me my name. "Bernard Rosenthal, Madam," I replied. "OK, we'll call you Barney," she said – and that has been my name ever since.

By now you will have understood that when I arrived in Berkeley at age nineteen, I did not exactly fit the image of Emma Lazarus's "tired, poor and huddled masses," her "wretched homeless refuse." I was a young man from a well-to-do and cosmopolitan family who had traveled widely (though not always willingly) and had never suffered physical deprivation.

As such, I was part of a group of several thousand German, Austrian, and Italian refugees from the upper bourgeoisie who managed to make their way here, who were fortunate enough to have the means to travel and, above all, who were still young and/or flexible enough to adapt to their new surroundings.

I registered at the University and was astonished when President Sproul invited all the freshmen to his residence and shook hands with each one of us – just one of the many examples of the kind of immediate acceptance which we found here, and of the openness and lack of pretentiousness which made a huge impression on those of us freshly arrived from Europe. I might mention a few statistics here: the population of California in 1939 was under seven million, the population of Berkeley was more or less the same as today – about one hundred thousand – and total student enrollment at Berkeley was almost eighteen hundred – very, very large by the standards of the day.

It was also a Berkeley without cappuccino and decent food....

Once courses began, I was in for another huge disappointment: the constant quizzes, mid-terms, and the homework. I was really indignant about this; in Italy, where your entire school life was poisoned by exams and tests and enormous amounts of homework, you spent your first couple of years at the University being treated like a grown-up, coasting along, cutting classes, having a good time and sowing your wild oats. And now I found out that in this country, everybody seems to have a good time in high school, and the hard work begins when you enroll in college. When I met high-school students I was utterly astonished that they all loved school!

And so it was pretty much *déjà-vu* all over again, and I didn't like it much.

What with a demanding curriculum and a part-time job, there wasn't much time for diversion, but in the winter months I managed to do a lot of skiing in the Sierra. I was thrilled to be accepted as a member of the University of California Ski

Team, an experience that contributed to my Americanization just as membership in the Italian team a few years earlier had helped me become Italian.

#### LANGUAGE EPISODES

By the time I arrived, in 1939, my English was fairly fluent. As children, starting when we were about eight years old, we all had private English lessons once a week. Far more effective and far less boring was the subscription to *Popular Mechanics* given to us by an American friend. Even more effective was a summer spent in England in 1936, part of it in a boarding house in Eastbourne with a resident tutor. Still, there were some mysteries – and here are a few examples.

The day I checked in to International House, I found a telegram in my mail box – a telegram from Houston, Texas. Surely a mistake, I thought; I didn't know anybody in Houston and I hardly knew where Texas was. But it was addressed quite plainly to me, and this is what it said: "Dear Bernard Rosenthal, please ignore my letter of yesterday. My wife explained everything. Letter follows. Signed, John Smith." Pretty baffling stuff. A few days later, I got the letter I was supposed to ignore, in which Mr. Smith, in rather nasty prose, told me that in this country people didn't go chasing after other men's wives and implying that if that's the way I behave, why don't I go back where I came from. I had no idea what this was all about. Then came the next letter, explaining that Mr. Smith had found, on his wife's desk, a postcard of mine, reminding her of our *rendez-vous* at such and such a date and time in New York. What had happened was this: on board the ship crossing the Atlantic I became the victim of three people desperately trying to find a fourth for bridge, and one of the three was Mrs. Smith, who was returning to Houston from a vacation in France with her little daughter. Despite my atrocious bridge game, the four of us formed a congenial group, and we had decided that, after landing in New York, we would all get together for dinner once more before continuing our separate journeys and destinies. I was put in charge of fixing the date and place, and I wrote each one of our group when and where I had reserved a table – in other words, where we would have our *rendez-vous* which, in French, is a perfectly innocent word but in this country, as I quickly learned, has other implications. Now imagine my surprise when, a few years later, during maneuvers with my Infantry Company in Oregon, my platoon leader sent me out on patrol and said, "And remember, we rendezvous back here at 11 a.m."



Another strange word I had not encountered before was “date.” A fellow student at International House asked me whether I had a date, and I replied, “Yes, it’s September 2nd,” but that was not what he meant. I finally understood that this had something to do with the dance that evening and that “date” meant someone to go out with. While I’m on the subject of dances, it happened that when saying good-night, my date thanked me for a nice evening and added something like, “You know, Barney, you’re different.” She didn’t realize that this was a great blow to my self-esteem. Here I was, having spent the best part of my life trying *not* to be different, and going to great lengths to be like everybody else, and here she tells me I’m different. This happened a number of times and rather turned me off. It wasn’t until much later – alas, *much* later – that I learned that this was meant as a compliment. Not only that, but American women seem to like men who speak with a foreign accent! But how was I to know; as boys in Florence, we made fun of everybody who spoke with a foreign accent, and that included Italians who had the misfortune of having been born outside the borders of Tuscany. And in France, my friends, although appreciative of my efforts to speak well, made it their business to correct my mistakes.

The indispensable vocabulary of profanities and expletives was acquired in the winter of 1939, when we students put the finishing touches on the ASUC Ski Lodge in Norden. It was very cold, the hammer slipped often and landed on a finger, and I carefully recorded in my mind the resulting vocabulary of my friends.

#### PEARL HARBOR

Life changed dramatically on December 7, 1941 – Pearl Harbor. I wanted to volunteer, but non-citizens were not allowed to join the armed forces. Not only was I a non-citizen; as a result of Executive Order 9066 issued by President Roosevelt in February of 1942, I was no longer recognized as an immigrant eager to become a citizen and fight the Nazis – I was classified as an enemy alien subject to military regulations. I should add that by then, my parents had made their way to Berkeley, and my brother Felix had also arrived. My parents must have represented a particular threat: Italian and German, a perfect embodiment of the Axis! By early 1942, we all faced deportation together with the citizens of Japanese ancestry, but at the last minute this was rescinded (apparently after a personal appeal to President Roosevelt by Thomas Mann, who was living in Los Angeles at the time) and instead

of being deported, we lived under a 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew, had our cameras confiscated, were not allowed to own shortwave radios, and were placed under severe travel restrictions – for every trip beyond a five-mile radius we had to get permission from the District Attorney’s office; permission was invariably granted, but what a nuisance! Also, the house we had rented on Coventry Road, high in the Berkeley hills, turned out to be in a “restricted zone,” that is, a zone which offered sweeping views of the Bay and in which there are sensitive strategic installations, water reservoirs, or that sort of thing; so we had to move and when, in April, 1942, our Japanese gardener, Mr. Yoshida (in those days, *all* gardeners were Japanese), came and, bowing politely, informed my parents that he could no longer tend our garden because he was being deported, my mother replied that she was just about to tell him, to her greatest regret, that she would no longer be able to use his services because we were forced to move to another area of Berkeley. Of course, the real victims of this anti-foreigner hysteria were the Japanese-Americans, and compared to what they went through, we had it easy.

We rented a house in another area of Berkeley, from which the view was hardly less good than from Coventry Road. There were occasional visits from polite and somewhat apologetic FBI agents, who came to check whether we were really at home after the 9 p.m. curfew. For my brother and me, social life was totally disrupted – who wants to go out with you on a date when you have to be home by 9? After a while, my father found it impossible to carry on business – imagine, every time he wanted to see Howell, he needed a travel permit – and in the fall of 1942, he decided to return to New York, where there were no restrictions. After my graduation in December of 1941, I knew that sooner or later the draft would catch up with me (you couldn’t volunteer, but you could be drafted), and I didn’t seem to be eager to go on with my studies during this period of uncertainty. I looked around for jobs where my major in chemistry would be useful, but enemy aliens were barred from working in defense industries and of course that included refineries and chemical laboratories. So, in the summer of 1942, I found a temporary job as a taxi driver with the Yellow Cab Company in Oakland – complete with a Teamster’s Union card. The District Attorney’s Office had granted me permission to work during the day shift and to travel about freely on the job. I can highly recommend taxi driving if you want to be a spy; the very first call I got came very early in the morning, and I found myself with six hung-over sailors in the cab, taking them to Vallejo Naval Base to rejoin their cruiser. Then there was the pilot



whom I had to drive right up to his plane on the runway at Alameda Air Base. And one day I spent about three hours in glorious weather, stuck with a flat tire on the Bay Bridge, gazing at all the ship and air traffic. This being wartime, we didn't carry spare tires and the procedure was to telephone the company and simply wait until they came and got you.

Incidentally, the speed limit – the *national* speed limit – was thirty-five miles per hour.

Eventually, in December, 1942, the "Greetings from the President" were in my mailbox, and on Christmas Day, 1942, Private Rosenthal was steam-cleaning garbage cans outside one of the mess halls of Fort Ord.

When it came time to be interviewed, I said that in view of my background, I might be useful in Intelligence. Ah, yes, of course – and so I found myself being assigned to basic training in Oregon in an Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon, which is where they train you to paint your face black with burnt cork, sneak behind enemy lines at night and capture and bring back prisoners. It's not the kind of Intelligence I had in mind, and thank God I never got an opportunity to practice these skills.

Immigration laws specified that you had to be a resident of the country for five years before you got your citizenship papers, but for those of us who were drafted, the time was shortened. In May of 1943, less than four years after listening to the advice of the kindly customs inspector in New York, Private First Class Bernard Rosenthal became a U.S. citizen.

By early 1944 the unit to which I had been attached, a so-called Civil Affairs regiment, was sent to England, where I had the great joy of being reunited with my brother Albi. Here I was, an American GI in his freshly pressed uniform, meeting this rather typical wartime English civilian, pale and wearing somewhat shabby clothes. We hadn't seen each other in five years, not since he had come aboard the ship that was taking me to America in 1939. Suddenly, we were speaking English to one another – or rather, he was speaking English and I was speaking American. Our accents of course became a source of great amusement and mutual teasing, my brother even archly suggesting that after the war I should return to the boarding house in Eastbourne to learn proper English again.

In July, 1944, six weeks after D-Day, my unit was sent to Normandy. Landing on French soil as a liberator five years after having left as a barely tolerated refugee was a somewhat strange experience, but the devastated landscape of Normandy

had little in common with the France that I had left behind. Our convoy drove through Paris a few days after its liberation, passing only a few hundred yards from where we had had our apartment. But I couldn't very well ask our colonel to please make a little detour and stop the convoy so I could say hello to our concierge. That was pretty frustrating.

It was with a feeling of grim satisfaction that I first set foot on German soil in 1945, shortly after the German surrender. I was no longer part of a people marked for extermination – I came as a soldier in a victorious army. I was assigned to a military government unit in a village in northern Germany, and since I still spoke German without an accent, I was able to communicate with people. I came to realize that things were not as black and white as I had thought and that wholesale condemnation was not the answer. I also realized that when speaking German, I was making the right sounds but I was no longer really speaking the same language. That's not so surprising: I had left Germany twelve years before, aged thirteen, and I was twenty-five when I returned, half my lifetime, almost. But I didn't feel comfortable on German soil, and I was relieved when my turn came to be discharged. I arrived in Berkeley in January, 1946, a little over three years after I had left.

Not long after my discharge, my parents, who in the meantime had returned to Berkeley from New York, bought a large house designed by Julia Morgan – one of its former owners had been Joseph LeConte – how Berkeley can you get! And they did get their cameras and short wave radios back, and they also got their U.S. citizenship.

But I was getting restless, and in 1947, barely a year after my discharge, thanks to my German and chemistry, I joined a government team sent to Germany to investigate processes and methods for the production of synthetic fuels developed in wartime Germany. Our team finished its work rather quickly and, being somewhat at a loss as to what to do, I decided that if I could find an interesting job with the government, I would stay in Europe a while longer. A civil service career began to look attractive.

In the fall of 1947 I metamorphosed from a German-speaking chemist into a French interpreter for the American Delegation in the Allied Control Council in Berlin. The idea of being in Berlin, where I had never been, and working at the highest level of the four-power government ruling Germany at the time seemed to offer a unique opportunity for being in the middle of things and for observing how such a government works – or doesn't work. My job ended abruptly six months



later, in March, 1948, when the Soviet Union imposed the Berlin blockade, and I was there when the first planes began to fly in to supply Berlin: the Berlin Airlift had begun. The Allied Control Council was put on ice and never revived, and interpreters were no longer needed.

I returned from Berlin to Berkeley in April, 1949. By then I had realized that I didn't have what it takes to be a good scientist, and also that I was not comfortable working in large organizations such as the civil service. I wanted something where I could be on my own, and there was one more thing to be tried: the antiquarian book business, in which so many members of my family had been, and continued to be, involved – as of 1949, relatives of mine were booksellers in England, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Argentina, the United States, and Italy.

When I mentioned this to my father, he thought I had gone mad. "I've already got a son who's in the business," he said, "and besides, there really are no more good books – and the few that are left have insanely high prices."

But I insisted, and he relented.

Bill Barlow has told you about the fifty years which followed in his three-minute introduction.

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~ Reviews

*The Book in America.* By Richard W. Clement. Fulcrum Publishers, Golden, Colorado (350 Indiana Street, #350, 80401-5093.) 150 pages. \$39.95.

Here is a fine book, still very much in print, but one that we missed when it appeared in 1996. *Nostra culpa.*

Make no mistake, this is not just a paste-and-scissors “coffee table book,” for all its folio dimensions, coated stock, and extra-illustrated text, with an image gracing every page. (All of its drawings, engravings, historical photographs, and maps are drawn from the riches of the Library of Congress.) It is a concise yet wide-ranging and documented overview of the history of the printed book in the United States. Best of all, it is quite readable.

Richard Clement is a special collections librarian at the University of Kansas Library, once headed by Californians Bob Vosper and Dave Heron. This volume is the ninth of the Library of Congress Classics. James H. Billington, Librarian of Congress, contributes a very short foreword, mostly about L.C., and John Cole, Director of that library’s Center for the Book, adds an equally brief afterword, mostly about the Center.

If you ever doubted that books are mirrors of human experience as well as “culture” with a capital “K,” pore over this volume. Books have long been physical as well as intellectual and often emotional – and even spiritual – manifestations of our progress as a nation. Many volumes that are mentioned here have shaped as well as recorded our progress. Take, for example, such best-sellers as Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, which (some say) detonated the Civil War. Or even temporary “losers” of their day that later experienced a biblio-renaissance: *Walden*, *Leaves of Grass*, *Moby-Dick*.

Although there are special sections, such as “Books At War” and “Libraries In America,” the approach is, generally, chronological from the Bay Psalm Book up to recent times. The chapters on the Colonial and post-Revolutionary press are valuable because most of us know little about these periods. There follows a chapter on the rise of our great publishing houses, like Harper, Holt, and Scribner. Even more interesting, probably, is the lore of the book when the Industrial Revolution



really kicks in during the years 1865–1918, and the final section on our post-World War I twentieth century, with its own publishing giants like Alfred A. Knopf.

Clement does not fail to show the dark side of the story, such as our stubborn (greedy?) piracy in the nineteenth century of the work of English publishers and authors – especially Dickens and Sir Walter Scott – instead of signing an international copyright convention. It was shameful.

Then there is the author's dismay, which I share, at the malaise into which much modern publishing has fallen, thanks to both friendly mergers and hostile takeovers. The result in both cases is that the bean-counters have wrested control from the enthusiastic editors of yesteryear and run the show with an eye, or two, always cocked at the "bottom line."

Our writers and readers, at least up til right now (and this is a dumbed-down decade if ever I saw one), made the United States into the most literate nation on earth. How could it be otherwise with such Founding Fathers as Ben Franklin and Thomas Jefferson? "Poor Richard" founded our first public, albeit subscription, library, Philadelphia's Library Company, and donated books to Yale, Harvard, and the American Philosophical Society. The Sage of Monticello's private library became the nucleus of the Library of Congress.

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Yet today, according to Clement, the real crisis is not conglomerate publishing or the threat of electronic gadgets supplanting books, but the astonishing rise in functional illiteracy in this country, once so proud of its schools, libraries, and educated citizenry.

The most interesting section of all to this reviewer is that devoted to the paperback revolution of 1939 and, particularly, its spin-off, the Armed Forces Editions of World War II. If I may interject a personal note, these slim, floppy "pocket books" kept at least one G.I. reasonably sane in the boredom of Stateside training and the terror of ETO combat. Called "the professor" because he always had his nose in a book, this buck private built up a fine, if heavy, duffel-bag library of these paperbacks. Alas, he lost the whole shebang when he was knocked out of action in October of 1944 in Lorraine. During three months in a hospital in Aix-en-Provence he built up another personal library, a tottering pile of books alongside his bed. But these were mostly "real books," hardbound volumes not to be swiped. And when he returned to his unit for the Rhine crossing, the Ruhr Pocket, and the push to Czechoslovakia, there simply was not time or opportunity to recreate his personal mobile library.

The aforesaid private did snag a few Armed Forces Editions to bring home, such as *The Wake of the Prairie Schooner*, which solidified his interest in Western Americana even as he floundered through Western Europe more than half a century ago.

If a book lies unread, it is not only inert, it is dead, *kaput*. But, by a miracle, it takes just the act of reading by a single individual to magically breathe life into its pages. (Heck, the Book Club's own Lawrence Clark Powell described this intellectual alchemy to us, decades ago!) So this survey salutes readers as well as writers, printers, and publishers.

The book is dedicated to "Susanne," presumably the worthy Mrs. Clement. This reviewer wishes that the dedicatee could have been its "Afterworder." Although the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, via its programs on the History of the Book in American Culture, and, lately, SHAPE, the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing, are going great guns, it was John Cole and his Center for the Book (1977) that got this new and welcome interdisciplinary field of study on the road. So, if Clement's volume cannot be dedicated to Cole, let us, at least, dedicate this review-of-the-book to him.

RICHARD H. DILLON

## Joe D'Ambrosio and *LX Commute: My Sentence*

By Dr. Adela Spindler Roatcap

AMONG THE MANY impressive items, such as S. Gale Herrick's gift of *Matrix*, that stunningly printed and indispensable yearly "review for printers and bibliophiles" from John Randle's Whittington Press, included in "Gifts to the Book Club" (January 24 through March 27, 2000, at the Club), one small book stood out for the quality and elegance of its front cover – Ann Whipple, *LX Commute: My Sentence*. Designed and typeset by Joe D'Ambrosio in his studio in Phoenix, Arizona, this small artist's book was published in 1996 in an edition of 250 copies. Typical of the work of Joe D'Ambrosio are books which elude definition as books through their sculptural effects or a variety of graphic media. In this case, *LX Commute* prompts the viewer to ask, "How did he do it?" or "How did he achieve such vibrant colors?"

Now, it has been a truism that one should not judge a book by its cover, and I venture to suggest Ann Whipple's book as a fascinating read. But here the cover adds an artistic dimension to the text. For those of us who live in San Francisco, that smallish big town surrounded on three sides by water, the Golden Gate Bridge, leading north to Marin, Sonoma, and Mendocino, and the Bay Bridge, which takes us east, to Berkeley and Oakland, are strong symbols of the unique geographical position. Since Mrs. Whipple's story concerns her daily travels across the Bay Bridge on an AC Transit bus, the LX Express (now LD), D'Ambrosio created a striking steel-blue image of the Bay Bridge towers and, in subtle hues of yellow, rose, and green, he depicted the treacherous, whirling waters of San Francisco Bay. How did he do it? In Joe D'Ambrosio's own words:

I cut the paper plates from 4-ply paper board and coated them with white glue. As the glue was drying, I either stippled them with a brush or used brush strokes to create different effects. The use of the white glue came about by accident. When I first tried this method, the force (or suction) of the printing press quickly tore the plies apart. So I simply used white glue to hold the entire plate together. It was then I realized the effect I could achieve if I worked with the white glue surface. Not only have I raised the surface of the paper plate with white glue; I can also create effects by tearing away parts of the plies of the board where before I was building them up. All of my paper plates are now in my archives at the California State Library in Sacramento.



One more feature gives this little book its unique character. On a felicitous suggestion from Susan Acker of the Feathered Serpent Press, tiny black buildings, just one or two, but sometimes a whole row of houses or factories, were interspersed throughout the text. As we travel with our author on her *LX Commute*, the text obliges us to see, as from the window of a bus, the changing scene. Perhaps even the blue-gray paper was meant to suggest early morning or our characteristic evening fog. One more distinguishing characteristic – *LX Commute* is a bona fide artist's book: signed by artist Joe D'Ambrosio on the front cover. But the price is a mere \$45, unusual for a book of this quality. Does D'Ambrosio still have a few copies at hand? You can find out by writing to him at 4449 North 12th Street, #A5, Phoenix, Arizona 85014-4520.

\* \* \*

### ~ Oscar Lewis Awards, 2000

The Club rooms were filled with an unusually happy group of members and friends of the recipients on the evening of Monday, February 28, for the eighth presentation of the Oscar Lewis Awards. Each year in February we give awards based upon nominations submitted the year before. As members know, we can give two prizes, one for achievement in Western history and the other for achievement in the book arts. The Committee, consisting of John Borden, Harry Goff, Peter Hanff, Joanne Sonnichsen, and emeritus chairman Harold Wollenberg, has the difficult task of picking awardees from a list of many excellent people who have been nominated by members of the Club. The recipients for the end-of-the century awards were Msgr. Francis J. Weber and J.S. Holliday for Western history and Andrew Hoyem for the book arts.

Excerpts from the introductory remarks follow.

JEREMY C. COLE, Chairman

### Monsignor Francis J. Weber

Monsignor Francis J. Weber merits the Oscar Lewis Award for Western History in so many ways that it is a challenge to know where to begin.

One of his recent achievements is the definitive biography of James Francis Cardinal McIntyre of Los Angeles, a significant figure in California history. This is just one of an astonishing number of publications. He has written, edited, and compiled one hundred forty-one volumes dealing primarily with California church history and the California missions. In addition, he has created one hundred seven miniature books and scores of essays, articles, and book reviews for encyclopedias and journals. Three of his books have been chosen by the Library of Congress for distribution in Braille.

Msgr. Weber has been Director of Mission San Fernando since 1981 and Archivist of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles since 1962. He served at one time as the editor of *The Tidings*, the official newspaper of the Los Angeles Archdiocese. He has also served as President of the Zamorano Club and the Miniature Book Society, and as Sheriff of the Los Angeles Corral of the Westerners.

He has received Awards of Merit from the California Historical Society and the Rounce and Coffin Club for books on Western history. He has been named a Fellow of the California Historical Society of Southern California.

These brief highlights of an illustrious career cannot mention all of his many accomplishments and honors. We are pleased to add the Oscar Lewis Award for Western History as further recognition of the distinguished achievements of Msgr. Weber, who, in the words of Kevin Starr, is indeed the "Dean of California Catholic Historians."

PAUL E. BIRKEL, Librarian Emeritus, University of San Francisco

### J. S. Holliday

I have never met a more energetic, dynamic, and passionate historian than J. S. Holliday. We know him best for writing two of the finest books you will ever read about our California: *The World Rushed In: The California Gold Rush Experience* and *Rush for Riches: Gold Fever and the Making of California*. His first book, published by Simon and Schuster in 1981, is still in print and has sold an astonishing 237,000 copies. *Rush for Riches*, his second book, published last year by the University of California Press, is already in its second printing and has sold well over twenty thousand copies – in our world, unheard-of numbers. Both, of course, have received numerous awards. Both titles have been selected by the History Book Club. Last year, the San Francisco *Chronicle* included *The World Rushed In* on its

list of the most important books on the American West. These numbers and accolades are not surprising, for both books are of the highest level of scholarship and written in the most vivid language imaginable.

I have had the joy of hearing Jim speak at least a hundred times, and each time he wows his audience. Jim is also a true “bibliogent.” His interest in the Gold Rush from his days at Yale brought him into contact with such legendary figures as Edward Eberstadt, Everett Graff, and Wright Howes. Warren Howell, David Magee, and Oscar Lewis were close associates. His discovery of the William Marshall Anderson manuscript journal concerning the overland trail and the Rocky Mountain fur trade represented one of the great “finds” of all time in Western Americana.

Beyond his writing and speaking on the Gold Rush and its aftermath, Jim’s contributions to history and culture are most evident here in the Bay Area. He taught history at San Francisco State University and served as Assistant Director of The Bancroft Library. As Executive Director of the Oakland Museum of California, he energized that institution and made possible that magnificent building on Oak Street. Jim twice served as Executive Director of the California Historical Society. Because of his powerful commitment to his goals, he has enjoyed the respect and devotion of those who have worked with him. There is no doubt about the legacy of J. S. Holliday, and he richly deserves this award.

GARY F. KURUTZ, Special Collections Librarian, California State Library

### Andrew Hoyem

The Book Club of California and the book arts in general in San Francisco have been blessed over the past eighty years by a succession of talented, innovative fine-press printers. This tradition has thrived in great part because of the work of printers such as the one we honor this evening, Andrew Hoyem. Forty years ago, just out of the Navy, Andrew began work as a printer at the Auerhahn Press in San Francisco. In 1966, he went to work with the Grabhorns at the Grabhorn Press, which eventually became the Grabhorn-Hoyem Press and later emerged as Andrew’s own Arion Press.

Throughout these forty years, Andrew learned from, contributed to, and strengthened this San Francisco area tradition of fine-press printing, but he also created his own distinctive voice, one for which he has become widely recognized. Under Andrew’s stewardship, the Arion Press has never feared breaking new ground in the book arts; it has not shied from controversy, nor has it shied



from the sometimes seemingly impractical. It has done much of this while combining the work of prominent artists with traditional texts, and in the process it has produced some of the most notable American press books of the last quarter-century.

Andrew's many achievements as a printer, publisher, book designer, and businessman are too numerous to recount here in full, but what is important to these proceedings is that we acknowledge the extraordinary overall contribution that he has made to a tradition which is central to why we are here at The Book Club of California.

JOHN P. CRICHTON, President, Book Club of California

\* \* \*

Club member Judy Robinson of San Francisco is enthusiastic about many things, but she lately forwarded to us some pages from a favorite, Sir Walter Scott's *The Antiquary*. These make a lively descant upon George Tweney's "Ten Commandments for Book Collectors" in the Spring issue of QN-L, and we thought readers might like to be reminded of one of Scott's enduring characterizations.

... it was chiefly upon his books that he [Mr. Oldbuck] prided himself, repeating, with a complacent air, as he led the way to the crowded and dusty shelves, the verses of old Chaucer—

*"For he would rather have, at his bed-head,  
twenty books, clothed in black or red,  
Or Aristotle, or his philosophy,  
Than robes rich, rebeck, or saltery."*

This pithy motto he delivered, shaking his head, and giving each guttural the true Anglo-Saxon enunciation, which is now forgotten in the southern parts of this realm.

The collection was, indeed, a curious one, and might well be envied by an amateur. Yet it was not collected at the enormous prices of modern times, which are sufficient to have appalled the most determined, as well as earliest bibliomaniac upon record, whom we take to have been none else than the renowned Don Quixote de la Mancha.... Mr Oldbuck did not follow these collectors in such excess of expenditure; but taking a pleasure in the personal labour of forming his library, saved his purse at the expense of his time and

toil. He was no encourager of that ingenious race of peripatetic middle-men, who, trafficking between the obscure keeper of a stall and the eager amateur, make their profit at once of the ignorance of the former, and the dear-bought skill and taste of the latter. When such were mentioned in his hearing, he seldom failed to point out how necessary it was to arrest the object of your curiosity in its first transit, and to tell his favorite story of Snuffy Davie and Caxton's Game at Chess – "Davy Wilson," he said "commonly called Snuffy Davy, from his inveterate addiction to black rappee, was the very prince of scouts for searching blind alleys, cellars, and stalls, for rare volumes. He had the scent of a slow-hound, sir, and the snap of a bull-dog. He would detect you an old black-letter ballad among the leaves of a law-paper, and find an *editio princeps* under the mask of a school Corderius. Snuffy Davie bought the 'Game of Chess, 1474,' the first book ever printed in England, from a stall in Holland, for about two groschen, or twopence of our money. He sold it to Osborne for twenty pounds, and as many books as came to twenty pounds more. Osborne resold this inimitable windfall to Dr Askew for sixty guineas. At Dr Askew's 'sale,' continued the old gentleman, kindling as he spoke, "this inestimable treasure blazed forth in its full value, and was purchased by Royalty itself, for one hundred and seventy pounds! Could a copy now occur, Lord only knows," he ejaculated, with a deep sigh and lifted-up hands, "Lord only knows what would be its ransom; and yet it was originally secured, by skill and research, for the easy equivalent of twopence sterling.<sup>1</sup> Happy, thrice happy, Snuffy Davie; and blessed were the times when thy industry could be so rewarded!

"Even I, sir," he went on, "though far inferior in industry and discernment, and presence of mind, to that great man, can shew you a few, a very few things, which I have collected, not by force of money, as any wealthy man might, – although, as my friend Lucian says, he might chance to throw away his coin only to illustrate his ignorance, – but gained in a manner that shews I know something of the matter. See this bundle of ballads, not one of them later than 1700, and some of them an hundred years older. I wheedled an old woman out of these, who loved them better than her psalm-book. Tobacco, sir, snuff, and the Complete Syren, were the equivalent! For that mutilated copy of the Complaynt of Scotland, I sat out the drinking of two dozen bottles of strong ale with the late learned proprietor, who, in gratitude, bequeathed it to me by his last will. These little Elzevirs are the memoranda and trophies of many a walk

<sup>1</sup>This bibliomaniacal anecdote is literally true; and David Wilson, the author need not tell his brethren of the Roxburghe and Bannatyne Clubs, was a real personage.

by night and morning through the Cowgate, the Canongate, the Bow, Saint Mary's Wynd – wherever, in fine, there were to be found brokers and trokers, those miscellaneous dealers in things rare and curious. How often have I stood haggling on a halfpenny, lest, by a too ready acquiescence in the dealer's first price, he should be led to suspect the value I set upon the article! – how have I trembled, lest some passing stranger should chop in between me and the prize, and regarded each poor student of divinity that stopped to turn over the books at the stall, as a rival amateur, or prowling bookseller in disguise! – And then, Mr Lovel, the sly satisfaction with which one pays the consideration, and pockets the article, affecting a cold indifference, while the hand is trembling with pleasure! – Then to dazzle the eyes of our wealthier and emulous rivals by shewing them such a treasure as this – (displaying a little black smoked book about the size of a primer) – to enjoy their surprise and envy, shrouding meanwhile under a veil of mysterious consciousness our own superior knowledge and dexterity – these, my young friend, these are the white moments of life, that repay the toil, and pains, and sedulous attention, which our profession, above all others, so peculiarly demands!”

Lovel was not a little amused at hearing the old gentleman run on in this manner, and, however incapable of entering into the full merits of what he beheld, he admired, as much as could have been expected, the various treasures which Oldbuck exhibited. Here were editions esteemed as being the first, and there stood those scarcely less regarded as being the last and best; here was a book valued because it had the author's final improvements, and there another which (strange to tell!) was in request because it had them not.

There is more, of course, and the details are wonderful: Treat yourself to a good read and never again be stumped when the crossword puzzle asks for a Scottish beadsman in eleven letters.

\* \* \*

### ~ Serendipity

#### *The committee chairman's musings*

Because of the press of good reading material – Barney Rosenthal's memoir is a real “scoop” – and popular demand, our remarks have been “ensmalled.”

Sadly, we report the passing of Karl Vollmayer, noted librarian, World War II airman, and genial spirit; and of Duncan H. Olmsted, diligent and tenacious indexer of this publication. Those who knew them better than ourselves will memorialize them for the Club.



On March 1, Book-of-the-Month Club and the Literary Guild joined in union to outfox the On-line. One California Book Club, though small, continues to prosper. From the Autumn 1999 issue of *The Journal of the William Morris Society* comes Nicholas Salmon's review of Peter Stansky's "elegant" [Take a bow, Wilsted & Taylor!] 1998 *Another Book That Never Was*. Englishman Salmon has only one lament, and that concerns rarity: "It is unlikely that many Morrisians on this side of the Atlantic will ever possess a copy." He concludes that Stansky's work "deserves to be on the shelves of everyone interested in Morris's work for the Kelmscott Press."

Luckily we finished reviewing the Book Club's back list, as new issues sell out immediately. Very few copies of Colin Franklin's large, gorgeous *Exploring Japanese Books and Scrolls* remain. We spent three years in Tokyo, came away with a few scrolls and a printed accordion book of a Daimyo's procession, but did not see the quality shown here in beautiful color plates. Coupled with Jonathan Clark's superb printing, it's a steal at \$150. [Late note: Sold out.]

BCC Keepsakes remain available. We were perusing a recent book catalogue when we noticed two parts of the Club's 1992 Keepsake, "California and the Civil War." One, by Richard H. Dillon on the "California Column," posted at \$15, while the other, John A. Hussey's "Thomas Starr King," building on the fame of his 1962 Book Club gem, the scarce Starr King's letters from Yosemite, stood at \$12.50. The cost of the complete, obviously under-appreciated, keepsake? At least an ounce of dust in value for only \$16 in currency. We forebear, blush, blush, to name the editor.

Continuing our (im)modest course, we note that "California Gold Rush Camps," the 1998 Club offering, remains in good supply for a mere \$20. Not only do purchasers get another Dillon, but added attractions include a Chalmers, complete with French artistry; a Kurutz, he of the sold-out Gold Rush bibliography; a Lapp, without mention of Archy Lee; a Doc Shumate, so legendary as to need no description; and a Whipple, she who makes the QN-L what it is. Bolster our fragile ego and buy them all!

Judy Yung, author of *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (1995), entertained us speaking on its 1999 sequel, again by the University of California Press. The 550 pages of *Unbound Voices*, ordinary women leading extraordinary lives, tap the voluminous oral histories Yung compiled – themselves marvels of the historian's craft. Yours for \$20 paper at 3.6 cents per page (\$55 cloth). Wisdom does come cheaply!

J.M.W. Turner's painting of the great Trafalgar veteran towed upriver to the breakers; albumen photographs of valiant men-of-war "in ordinary" with upper masts down; images of the Oakland Estuary's "Rotten Row." All gone in time. Rarely does a *Jeremiah O'Brien* sail forth. Now comes Daniel Madsen's *Forgotten Fleet: The Mothball Navy* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press; \$36.95). He tells of valor and humanity aboard these rusting relics, these gray ghosts above Benicia.

Oak Knoll Press (310 Delaware Street, New Castle, Delaware 19720) has re-issued at \$95 Michael Twyman's *Printing 1770–1970: An Illustrated History of Its Development and Uses in England*. Twyman, the majority author of our current keepsake, produced such grand scholarship that Peter Koch printed this keepsake as a book, not separate parts – additionally making the Book Club the only organization to celebrate two hundred years of lithography!

To read the best of twentieth-century literature, one must locate it. Obviously, book stores are a good place to begin. In 1999, "Three Grasshoppers" undertook to aid bewildered customers trapped in a famed Bay Area establishment on University Avenue, Berkeley. The first volume of *The Key to Serendipity*, "How to Buy Books from Peter B. Howard," now has a \$20 sequel for 2000, "How to Find Books in Spite of Peter B. Howard." Reportedly, the third part will be a map of Serendipity Books – with compass and provisions provided. Similarly, we cannot let pass the title of a Louisiana State University mass communication prof's latest work: *Casanova Was a Book Lover: And Other Naked Truths and Provocative Curiosities about the Writing, Selling, and Reading of Books*. Just out at \$24.95.

We have heard good lawyer jokes – but good joking lawyers are scarce. But then, this is San Francisco. In 1947, attorney Nat and sister Kay Schmulowitz began donating their humorous collection of unusual periodicals, popular books, and great rarities to the San Francisco Public Library. Now, the Schmulowitz Collection of Wit and Humor ("SCOWAH") has 14,000 volumes, growing. Jack Boulware in the *SF Weekly* remarked it is "the world's second largest collection of humor and folklore, eclipsed only by the House of Humour and Satire collection in Gabrovo, Bulgaria" – and much closer.

ROBERT J. CHANDLER

\* \* \*

Last December, a copy of the Club's 1938 imprint *An Original Leaf from the Polychronicon* was offered in the catalogue of Pacific Book Auction Galleries. The

estimate was \$1,000 to \$1,500 for this Grabhorn production, described as suffering from "A little sunning to the covers, corners a bit bumped, 1/4" waterspot to front board, else very good." We learned from Pacific Book Auction's on-line archive of prices realized that it sold for \$1,380.00, including the 15% buyer's premium. The cost at publication? \$15.00.

\* \* \*

Club member Jerry Wentling, Co-Founder and President of the Concord (Contra Costa County) Historical Society, has sent us a tribute to the last descendant of the founders of the City of Concord: Ruth Galindo died on Christmas Day, 1999, at the age of eighty-nine. As Mr. Wentling notes, today few cities in California can boast that a descendant of its founder still lived in the original family home. Concord was founded in 1869 as Todos Santos by Salvio Pacheco, his son Fernando, and his son-in-law, Francisco Galindo. The latter, Miss Galindo's great-grandfather, was descended from members of the second de Anza expedition of 1776. Anyone who knows Contra Costa will realize that the names of Miss Galindo's forebears continue there as place and street names. A revered teacher and community volunteer, Miss Galindo will be missed in her beloved Concord, most especially by her friends in the Concord Historical Society, of which she was a Charter Member.

### ~ Gifts and Acquisitions

Thanks to Robert Hawley of Ross Valley Books for the latest keepsake, the thirtieth, from his Oyez Press: "The Last Letters: William Everson and Robert Duncan." The elegant folded sheet contains two important and moving letters from 1985; two hundred and fifty copies were printed at the Havilah Press, Emeryville, California. It will join our collection of Oyez imprints in the ephemera files.

\* \* \*

We are grateful to Robert B. Stinnett for a copy of his work, *Day of Deceit: The Truth about FDR and Pearl Harbor* (The Free Press, a division of Simon & Schuster, Inc., New York, 2000; \$26.) This will be added to our growing collection of publications by Club members.

\* \* \*

Nevada member Jack Bacon has presented us with his publication of *Nevada's Paul Laxalt: A Memoir* by Senator Paul Laxalt. Our copy is number 72 of the specially



bound and signed edition of 100, and we are grateful for this attractive illustrated volume. Senator Laxalt's account of his life and political career makes interesting reading and a contribution to Western history at the same time. The son of Basque immigrants – his father worked as a shepherd and his mother ran a restaurant and hotel in Carson City – Laxalt came somewhat reluctantly to politics but acquitted himself with honor as Nevada's governor and senator. Having his story for our library is an honor for us. (The regular edition is five thousand copies, from R. H. Donnelley and Sons.)

\* \* \*

Thank you to the Foolscap Press, now of Santa Cruz, for "A Letter to Isabelle Rimbaud" from Maurice Sanglot. The sealed letter surfaced in a trunk in Abyssinia after its writer's death; La Société de Arthur Rimbaud de Charleville now holds it. This translation is the first appearance of its contents outside Charleville. The six-page booklet is dated April 1, 2000, but has no colophon. The cover replicates the envelope, even to a facsimile stamp, in colors, from "Ethiopie"—altogether a fascinating item.

### ~ Exhibition Notes

The Club recently hosted "Gifts to the Library," a display of over forty recent acquisitions. Among the many books included were *A Salon at Larkmead* (1999), by Drew Sparks, designed and printed by Peter Koch, and given to the Club by Mills College Center for the Book; *Chronology of Twenty-Five Years: The Roxburghe Club of San Francisco, 1928-1953* (1954), printed at the Grabhorn Press and a gift to the Club from George Fox in memory of Albert Sperisen; a copy of the rare Grabhorn book, *A Brief History of Japanese Color Prints and Their Designers* (1938) presented by Barbara Land in memory of Albert Sperisen; a copy of *Valenti Angelo: Author, Illustrator, and Printer* (1976) in a custom binding by Eleanore Ramsey, presented to the Club by Duncan Olmsted; and a copy of the Whittington Press *Song of Songs* (1979) and a complete set of *Matrix* from S. Gale Herrick. Other titles in the exhibition included *Women in Printing: Northern California, 1857-1890* (1994) by Roger Levenson, given to the Club by Lee Engdahl, and *John S. Fass and the Hammer Creek Press* (1998) by Jackson Burke, a gift to the Club from George Chapman Singer.

One especially rare item in the exhibit was a copy of *Bummer & Lazarus*, published by the San Francisco printer A. Van Bergen and Company. This small booklet about Emperor Norton's dogs is not listed in Anne Bancroft's *The Memorable*

*Lives of Bummer & Lazarus* (Ward Ritchie Pres, 1939). This treasure, as well as many others, was presented to the Club by Betty Potter.

The Exhibitions Committee is pleased to “show off” these recent gifts and joins the Library Committee in thanking members for their generosity and support of the library.

JOHN HAWK, Special Collections Librarian, Donohue Rare Book Room,  
Gleeson Library, University of San Francisco

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Karl A. Vollmayer

Former Director and long-time library volunteer Karl Vollmayer died November 19, 1999, at the age of eighty-three. He had been one of the industrious group who put together the Club’s ephemera collection, now neatly housed in archival boxes and conveniently docketed. Always gently helpful, Karl has been missed and will be remembered here. The Club offers condolences to his wife and family.

A native of Toledo, Ohio, he left the University of Toledo to serve in the Air Force during World War II. He resumed his interrupted education at the University of San Francisco and did graduate work in Library Studies at the University of Washington, Seattle. His library career began in Reno, Nevada, whence he returned to California to become Assistant Library Director for the City of Richmond. There he met his future wife, Catherine, and they were married in 1954. In 1960, Mr. Vollmayer became director of the library system in Redwood City. Through his persistence, the system’s scattered facilities were united in a new library, which opened in 1988 – not long after his retirement. The city named the mezzanine in his honor, the Karl A. Vollmayer Local History Room. A memorial service was held in late December at our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Redwood City.

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“The Albert Sperisen Library of The Book Club of California”

At its January meeting, the Board of Directors voted to name the library in honor of the late Albert Sperisen, who worked so long and tirelessly to form the Club’s collection.



## WANTED Student Members

Last year the Club's Directors approved the establishment of a student membership category at \$25.00 per year. Many students are in sympathy with the aims and objectives of The Book Club of California but unable to afford the regular membership dues. Like many organizations, we believe it is important to consider student memberships for new and younger members in order to take advantage of the new thoughts and ideas they might bring from their academic community, thus helping to keep organizations like ours viable in the new electronic or cyberspace revolution.

Student members enjoy all the privileges of regular membership except the annual keepsake (which they can purchase at the Club's regular price). Still a considerable savings. Student members do not count against the Club membership limit of one thousand and currently will be restricted to one hundred. Student membership is open to high school, full-time community college, and undergraduate college students. Applications for membership must be accompanied by a copy of a student enrollment card reflecting the full-time status of the applicant.

While the Club's Web Page and the Club's *Quarterly News-Letter* contain information about student membership, we consider that the best way of attracting and recruiting student members is through our regular members. They are fully aware of the aims and objectives of the Club and its many benefits and can more effectively pass on this information to students as well as to others. Perhaps you have a child, grandchild, relative or student of your acquaintance who is eligible for student membership and shows an interest in books and the book arts, or in Pacific Coast history, literature, and fine printing and who deserves your sponsorship for membership in the Club. If so, please call The Book Club of California office at (415) 781-7532 (or toll free at 1-800-869-7656) and ask for a membership application. If you are on the Internet and have a Web Page that attracts student queries, it will be helpful to the Club if you could "link" The Book Club of California's student membership opportunities.

As a special incentive, the first twenty-five sponsors of a student member will receive a complimentary copy of a Book Club Keepsake. That would make a fine gift to your newly sponsored student member!



Please help us in this worthwhile student membership recruiting effort. It is important to the Club to attract these younger prospects. Their membership will go a long way toward continuing the growth, vitality, and prestige of The Book Club of California.

Respectfully,  
THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

### ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP

<i>new Patron Members</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>sponsor</i>
Cathy Adelman	Malibu	Eleanore Ramsey
Roberta Cairney	San Francisco	Michael Carabetta
Charles J. Soderquist, PhD	Sacramento	Robert D. Haines, Jr.
Mark Stirling	South Lake Tahoe	John Crichton

#### *new sustaining members*

Arthur S. Cheslock	Baltimore, MD	Jerry Cole
Ken Sanders	Salt Lake City, UT	John Crichton
John R. Shuman	Piedmont	Andrew Griffin
Robert J. Trujillo	Berkeley	David C. Weber & Peter Stansky

#### *new Regular Members*

James S. Jaffe	Haverford, PA	John Crichton
Patricia L. Keats	San Francisco	Harry R. Goff
Norman Graham Leaper	San Francisco	Robert J. Chandler
Bruce R. Levy	Nevada City	William F. Fry
Jon Mustain	Stanford	Peter Stansky
Richard Press	Sacramento	John Crichton
Lewis Reines	Philadelphia, PA	John Crichton
Derrick Schneider	Oakland	Richard Hilkert
Valerie Urban	San Francisco	George Fox

*The following members have transferred from regular to sustaining status:*

Marjorie Block	Kentfield
William Bloemendaal	Holland, MI